



County of Los Angeles
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March 17, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
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From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

MOTION TO SUPPORT ASSEMBLY BILL 1979 (BASS) WHICH WOULD WAIVE FEES FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR FOSTER YOUTH MENTORS (ITEM NO. 75-B - AGENDA OF MARCH 21, 2006)

Item No. 75-B on the March 21, 2006 Agenda is a motion by Supervisor Knabe recommending that the Board of Supervisors support AB 1979 (Bass). As introduced on February 9, 2006, AB 1979 would waive fees for conducting criminal background checks charged to any nonprofit agency approved by the State, or a county or city that provides mentoring services for children in foster care.

On January 4, 2005, your Board requested that the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect Task Force on Mentoring and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) work toward the goal of providing a mentor for every foster child in Los Angeles County by 2010. These mentors will be recruited and trained by designated nonprofit agencies in Los Angeles County. The mentors will be required to undergo an in-depth screening which will include a criminal background check conducted by the California Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Under current law, the DOJ may charge a fee to cover the costs of conducting the criminal background check. The fee may range from \$34 to \$97. AB 1979 would prohibit the DOJ from charging a fee to a county-approved nonprofit agency that provides mentorship services to children in foster care. This would facilitate the recruitment and placement of mentors with foster children in Los Angeles County.

Each Supervisor
March 17, 2006
Page 2

DCFS recommends a support position on AB 1979. Current Board policy supports proposals to streamline and consolidate criminal clearances that must be administered to a caregiver of a child in foster care for licensure, approval, and adoption, but it is silent on the waiver of fees for conducting the criminal clearance for mentors of foster children. **Therefore, support for AB 1979 is a matter for Board determination.**

There is currently no registered support or opposition to AB 1979. The bill is scheduled to be heard in the Assembly Human Services Committee on March 21, 2006.

DEJ:GK
MAL:JF:VE:hg

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Executive Director, Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect